

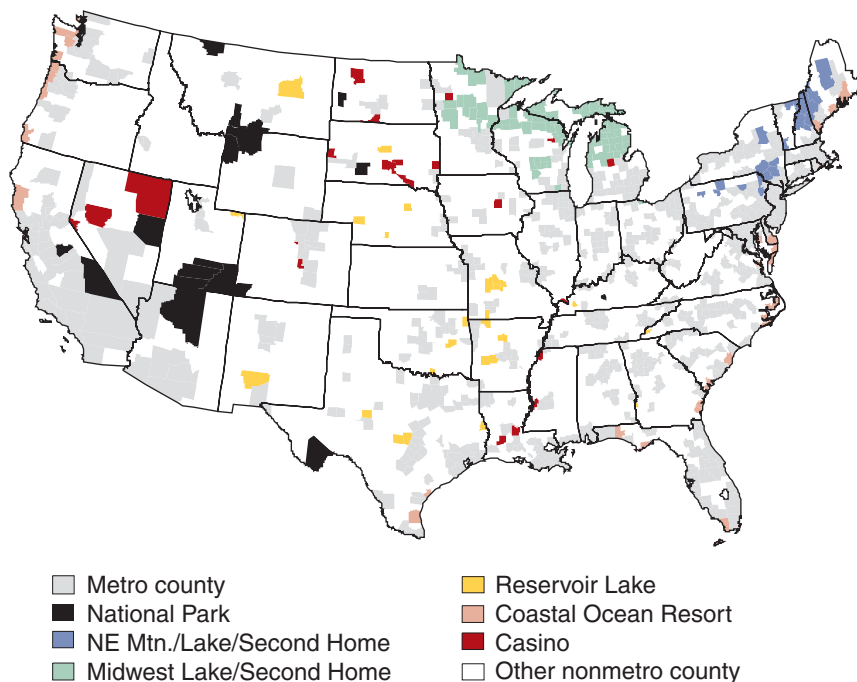
Variations by Type of Recreation County

As noted, Johnson and Beale (2002) categorized each recreation county as belonging to 1 of 11 mutually exclusive recreational groupings, a classification that provides greater insight into the recreational component of each county (figs. 6 and 7). The single most common category is the Midwest Lake and Second Home, accounting for 70 counties and overwhelmingly concentrated in central and northern Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (table 4). The Northeast Mountain, Lake, and Second Home group, a closely related category, is mainly concentrated in northern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont) and in portions of New York and Pennsylvania. Together, these two similar categories account for more than a quarter of all recreation counties. Both categories are relatively prosperous: Northeast counties had the highest level of earnings per job among all recreation types, and the Midwest category experienced sharp increases in household income during the 1990s (table 5). Both regions had rates of poverty among the lowest of all recreation categories (table 6).

Although almost every type of recreation county registered at least double-digit population growth during the 1990s (the exception being the Northeast Mountain, Lake, and Second Home), Ski Resort counties grew the fastest (increasing 38 percent), continuing a trend from the 1980s. Other recreation categories in the West (West Mountain and Other Mountain) also experienced rapid population growth. Ski Resort counties stand out in other ways,

Figure 6

Nonmetropolitan recreation categories by type (part 1), 2002

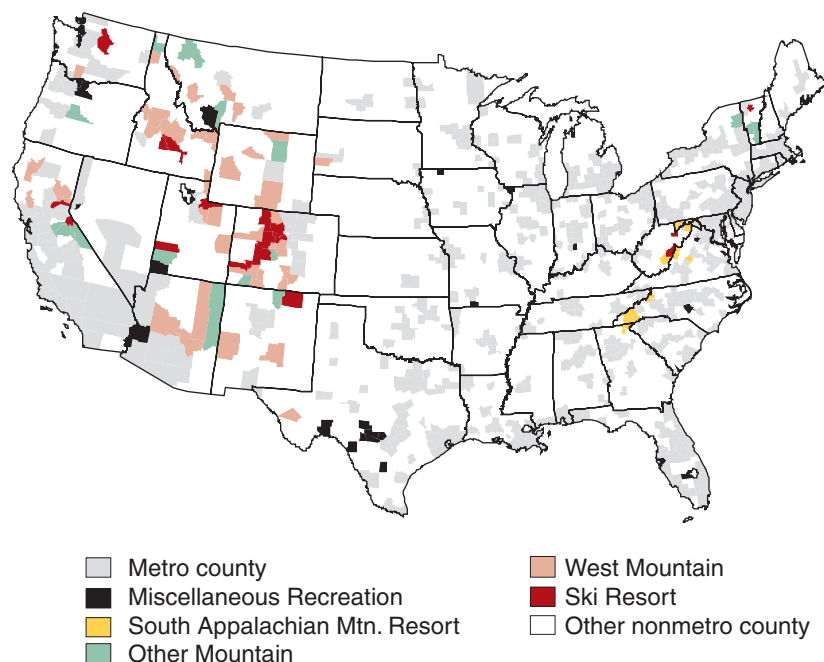


Note: Excludes counties in Alaska and Hawaii.

Source: Adapted from Kenneth M. Johnson and Calvin L. Beale, 2002. "Nonmetro Recreation Counties: Their Identification and Rapid Growth," *Rural America*, Vol. 17, No. 4:12-19.

Figure 7

Nonmetropolitan recreation categories by type (part 2), 2002



Note: Excludes counties in Alaska and Hawaii.

Source: Adapted from Kenneth M. Johnson and Calvin L. Beale, 2002. "Nonmetro Recreation Counties: Their Identification and Rapid Growth," *Rural America*, Vol. 17, No. 4:12-19.

measuring substantially higher than other recreation counties on a number of economic variables, including ratio of employment to population, earnings per job, earnings per worker, per capita income, and median household income. Ski Resorts also had the lowest poverty rate among all recreation categories, but had substantially higher housing costs—nearly 40 percent higher than the average for other nonmetro counties—which grew rapidly during the 1990s. Ski Resort counties also stand out in terms of social indicators, having the highest levels of educational attainment, the largest number of doctors, the lowest death rates, and the highest rate of crime among all recreation categories.

In contrast, Reservoir Lake counties and South Appalachian Mountain Resort counties are among the most economically challenged recreation county types. Reservoir Lake counties, which are mainly located in the Midwest and Great Plains regions, and South Appalachian Mountain Resort counties—in the upland areas of Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland—have among the lowest earnings per worker and lowest median household income levels. They also have among the lowest rents. Both of these regions have among the lowest levels of educational attainment. Further, they have higher-than-average age-adjusted death rates, but relatively low crime rates. The South Appalachian Mountain Resort category also has a significantly longer commute than other other nonmetro counties, possibly a reflection of its mountainous topography.

Table 4

Recreation county categories

Recreation category	Number of counties
Midwest Lake and Second Home	70
Northeast Mountain, Lake, and Second Home	19
Coastal Ocean Resort	35
Reservoir Lake	27
Ski Resort	20
Other Mountain (with Ski Resorts)	17
West Mountain (excluding Ski Resorts and National Parks)	46
South Appalachian Mountain Resort	17
Casino	21
National Park	18
Miscellaneous	21
Total	311

Source: Kenneth M. Johnson and Calvin L. Beale, "Nonmetro Recreation Counties: Their Identification and Rapid Growth," *Rural America*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2002:12-19.

Casino counties also have relatively low levels of economic development, with the highest rate of poverty—over 40 percent higher than for all recreation counties—as well as below-average levels of per capita income, median household income, and earnings per worker. Still, during the 1990s, Casino counties, which are mainly located in the Upper Midwest, the Dakotas, the Mississippi Delta region, and Nevada, collectively had sharp employment growth (a third faster than the average for all recreation counties). Casino counties, which benefited from the establishment of gambling on Native American reservations during the 1990s, had a lower level of educational attainment, fewer physicians, a higher-than-average age-adjusted death rate, and a significantly higher rate of crime than most other recreation counties.

Table 5

Economic conditions and trends by type of recreation county

Indicator	Casino	Ocean Resort	Reservoir Lake	MW Lake Home	NE MT/LK Home	Nat. Park	West MT	Ski Resort	Other MT	South AP MT Resort	Rec. Misc.	Rec. total	Non-rec. total
Employment growth 1990-2000	31.7*	19.2*	24.9*	23.3*	3.5	19.0*	25.0*	35.3*	26.0*	18.7*	29.2*	23.7*	9.8
<i>Percent</i>													
Employment/population ratio in 2000													
Ages 16-24	66.0	67.5	64.6	67.3	68.8	66.3	66.5	74.3*	67.2	66.1	68.1	67.4	66.7
Ages 25-64	70.4	69.9	67.3	69.4	72.1	69.9	69.7	77.4*	70.6	69.4	71.0	70.3	70.3
Ages 65 and over	16.0*	13.8	13.3	10.0*	11.6	15.3	15.5*	19.3*	13.5	11.1*	14.8	13.6	13.4
<i>Percentage points</i>													
Change 1990-2000													
Ages 16-24	1.0	-1.4*	0.2	2.7*	1.3	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.5	-0.1	-0.7	0.7*	0.0
Ages 25-64	0.7	-1.4	0.6	2.8*	1.1	0.5	-0.0	0.4	0.6	-0.7	-0.4	0.7*	-0.3
Ages 65 and over	2.2	1.6	1.2	2.0	0.8	0.9	0.5	3.0	0.8	1.3	0.9	1.5	1.4
<i>Dollars</i>													
Earnings per job in 2000	24,372	23,698	19,630*	22,710	25,255*	21,233	20,058*	24,294	23,560	22,412	20,604	22,334	22,780
Change 1990-2000	6,748	5,761	4,264	5,359	5,100	4,383	3,487*	7,394*	5,342	5,848	4,887	5,340	5,140
Earnings per worker in 1999	28,249	31,905*	27,033	29,314*	28,968*	28,346	28,618*	34,992*	30,391*	28,596	30,089*	29,593*	27,445
Income per capita in 2000	21,865	26,628*	20,002	21,485	23,718*	21,891	20,717	29,552*	22,898*	21,895	24,215*	22,810*	20,727
Change 1990-2000	7,457	8,813*	5,802*	7,243*	7,566*	7,363	5,704	11,080*	7,323	7,834*	8,419*	7,471*	6,564
Median household income in 1999	33,325	37,239*	29,635*	34,896*	34,447*	33,215	33,905*	44,521*	36,128*	32,843	36,396*	35,001*	31,812
Change 1989-1999	11,477	11,475*	10,280	13,495*	9,411*	11,231	11,146	16,220*	11,630*	11,244	11,677*	11,952*	10,531
Median monthly rent in 2000	440*	556*	384	421*	460*	445*	473*	660*	535*	431*	488*	474*	384
Change 1990-2000	115	140*	110	111	85*	126	151*	228*	142*	129*	150*	134	104

Note: These are county averages (simple means).

MW=Midwest; NE=Northeast; MT=Mountain; LK=Lake; Nat.=National; AP=Appalachian; Misc.=Miscellaneous; Rec.=Recreation.

*Significantly different from nonrecreation county mean at 5-percent error level.

Source: ERS calculations based on data from U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, and Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Recreation types from Johnson and Beale (2002), USDA, Economic Research Service.

Table 6

Social conditions and trends by type of recreation county

Indicator	Casino	Ocean Resort	Reservoir Lake	MW Lake Home	NE MT/LK Home	Nat. Park	West MT	Ski Resort	Other MT	South AP MT Resort	Rec. Misc.	Rec. total	Non-rec. total
Population growth 1990-2000	16.7*	18.8*	20.4*	15.8*	5.8	13.3*	Percent 27.6*	38.0*	24.9*	18.4*	23.3*	20.2*	6.9
Mean travel time to work in 2000	21.7	22.3	24.3	22.3	23.3	20.3*	Minutes 23.1	22.1	21.2	26.3*	23.5	22.7	23.0
Change 1990-2000	2.7*	3.8	4.8	4.8*	4.8	4.1	5.1*	4.6	3.9	5.3	3.6	4.4	4.3
Poverty rate in 1999	18.8*	12.4*	15.2	10.7*	12.0*	16.2	Percent 14.0*	10.2*	13.9	13.2*	13.3	13.2*	15.7
Change 1989-1999	-4.3	-1.6*	-2.9	-4.4*	0.0*	-4.4	Percentage points -1.3*	-1.6*	-1.5*	-2.6	-2.1	-2.6	-3.1
Residents without high school diploma in 2000	21.2*	19.0*	23.6	18.0*	18.7*	17.7*	Percent 16.1*	11.8*	14.5*	24.7	19.8*	18.4*	25.0
Change 1990-2000	-7.3	-6.9*	-9.4*	-8.9	-6.3*	-6.8	Percentage points -5.9*	-3.5*	-5.6*	-10.8*	-7.4	-7.4	-8.4
Residents with at least a B.A. degree in 2000	16.2*	22.5*	13.3	14.9*	17.7*	20.9*	Percent 20.5*	33.2*	24.3*	17.0*	19.6*	19.2*	13.6
Change 1990-2000	2.7	4.7*	2.8	3.4*	2.7	4.2*	Percentage points 4.5*	6.5*	4.8*	3.4*	4.2*	4.0	2.4
Physicians per 100,000 residents in 2003	78.0	166.6*	52.8*	97.5	181.9*	110.1	Number 109.9*	192.0*	190.7*	149.7*	114.4	123.0*	83.4
Age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 residents in 2000-02	955.6	839.5*	858.8	829.7*	869.0	809.1*	766.3*	661.7*	759.3*	869.7	772.7*	817.3*	898.3
Rate of serious crime per 100 residents in 1999	3.2*	3.2*	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6	3.8*	3.0	2.0	3.3*	2.8*	2.4

Note: These are county averages (simple means). MW=Midwest; NE=Northeast; MT=Mountain; LK=Lake; Nat.=National; AP= Appalachian; Misc.=Miscellaneous; Rec.=Recreation. *Significantly different from non-recreation county mean at 5-percent error level.

Source: ERS calculations based on data from U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, and Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Recreation types from Johnson and Beale (2002), USDA, Economic Research Service.